

DRUG AND ALCOHOL CARER FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON

Tuesday 28 January 2020, At Oxlease House, Travellers Lane,
Hatfield, AL10 8TJ

Carers: 7


Apologies 2

Chair: Nicola Beedell (NB)

Minutes: Rosemarie Muldoon (RM)

Staff: Sarah Williams (SW)

Guest Speaker: Sue Campbell (SC) Herts Help

Item	
1	Welcome Nicola Beedell (NB) welcomed everyone to the Information Forum and people introduced themselves
2.	Presentation by Sue Campbell on behalf of Herts Help  HertsHelp Presentation.ppt Questions and Answers: Someone asked if a person could claim benefits if they were living in the family home and were not able to claim Job Seekers Allowance. Sue Campbell (SC) said that it was possible for someone to claim Universal Credit if their GP agreed to give them a medical certificate to confirm that they are unfit to work.

	<p>A carer then asked if it would be necessary to “means test” the whole family in order that the person receive Universal Credit</p> <p>SC said that the whole of the family will not be financially assessed when determining one person’s eligibility for Universal Credit</p> <p>There was a question about Herts Warmer Homes, which is a Heating Improvements Service, that was mentioned during the presentation. NB asked whether it is possible to get heating improvements even if someone lived in a Council, Housing Association or rented property</p> <p>SC said it was generally the responsibility of the Council, Housing Association or landlord to carry out heating improvements in the properties they owned. However, it might be possible to use Herts Warmer Homes.</p> <p>Someone asked what the term Brokerage meant in terms of its use in the presentation.</p> <p>SC said that Brokerage described the role of a person (the broker) who purchases services from a third party on behalf of a service user. In this instance the broker would arrange a service for someone once that individual’s care needs have been assessed and agreed</p> <p>The question was asked as to how many referrals come to Herts Help from people with drug and/or alcohol issues, or from the people who care for them.</p> <p>SC said that they would get about one referral a week on average. SC said that for the most part these people would be referred to Change Grow Live (CGL) Spectrum.</p>
3.	Five Minute Break
4.	<p>Discussion/Suggestions for new guest speakers for the forthcoming Information Forums</p> <p>Turning Point will be asked to come along and present information about their service at some point in the future.</p>

	<p>However, they are not taking on new clients presently as they are extremely busy.</p> <p>A presentation on what people might do in a crisis was suggested. NB will contact Raymond Jay, from CGL, to invite him to the next forum.</p> <p>A request for Night Light to present again towards the end of 2020</p> <p>A Disability Employment Advisor could be asked to attend at some point during the year.</p> <p>A request was made for someone from Mind to come along and present at a Forum.</p> <p>It was also suggested that someone from HPFT could come along and talk about the new Personality Disorder Pathway.</p> <p>It was also suggested that someone from the Police or another organisation come along and talk about domestic abuse.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Minutes from previous Forum All agreed</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Feedback/AOB</p> <p>Someone mentioned the challenges of supporting someone with drug and/or alcohol addiction. The concern was that by supporting someone financially they might be perceived as enabling their “loved ones” addiction. However, not supporting them financially might lead to criminality.</p> <p>There was an open discussion about the “enabling issue” and other dilemmas facing people when they are trying to support someone with drug and/or alcohol issues.</p> <p>People talked about supporting someone who frequently becomes angry and aggressive within the home. Peoples</p>

concerns about how a carer manages angry and aggressive behaviours was discussed.

The forum suggested ways that people could cope when their cared for person is becoming aggressive. It was advised that everyone calls 999 when they are worried about their own safety.

The issue of dual diagnosis was raised by a carer. The decision not to treat someone when they have mental health issues and are still using drugs and/or alcohol made it impossible for people to have their mental health needs assessed. The policy is that individuals cannot receive assessments or treatments for their mental health problems unless they are abstinent, or have significantly reduced their intake of either drugs or alcohol.

Several carers said that this policy made things very difficult. However, carers acknowledged the challenges of assessing a person's mental health needs when they are still abusing substances.

NB said that the dual diagnosis protocol will be reviewed, and that HPFT and CGL seem committed to making improvements. NB said that she will be looking for feedback from carers.

NB informed the forum that Hertfordshire Alcohol Counselling Service (HACS) has now closed due to funding issues.

Information on support services available across the County could be found on Carers in Hertfordshire's Website and on CIH Newsletters

	<p>Sarah Williams (SW) said that Carers and Hertfordshire and Viewpoint have been developing a new model of treatment and care specifically targeted at supporting people with an enduring mental health condition and/or complex needs who have been in HPFT services for 10 years or more. At this point the model is a proposal only, but fundamentally at the heart of it is an ambition to help to provide a better quality of life for service users and long-term carers living in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>On 9th December 2019, Carers in Hertfordshire and Viewpoint, together with a group of service users and carers, presented the model to HPFT Sarah Damms and Jo Edwards and commissioner Emma Williams and we have invited the HPFT service user and carer councils, HPFT staff and board of governors, and a commissioner to a further meeting on 25th February, 2020. Sarah will keep the Forum up-to-date with developments.</p> <p>It was confirmed that Sarah Damms, who is an officer at Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT), has secured a position within mental health services at HPFT. SD previously worked supporting people with learning disabilities</p>
7	<p>Next Forum: Tuesday 24th March 10:00am- 1:00pm</p> <p>Oxlease House Travellers Lane Hatfield AL10 8TJ</p>